

What is the Outdoor Education Program?

The Eastern 4-H Center offers an inventive way to implement instruction on Course of Study objectives outside of a traditional classroom. Moreover, we provide supplemental education on classroom objectives that are much better understood from an outdoor environment. Using the outdoors as a living laboratory, students and teachers alike will experience hands-on learning - learning that demands attentiveness and encourages interest. We strive to do all programs in the great outdoors, weather permitting. While offering a wide variety of standard programming, there are also opportunities to have your programming customized to fit specialized objectives. The Eastern 4-H Center employs well-qualified, highly motivated instructors to lead activities. The “Reaching New Heights” Team Challenge Course offers even more opportunities for students to build confidence and trust in themselves and their peers. If you choose, many ecology classes can be taught from a canoe while exploring the pocosin swamps and beautiful Albemarle Sound. The instructional staff utilizes Project WET, Project Learning Tree, and other numerous other sources of curriculum – just so you know! A multitude of nightly programs are also offered to keep students entertained.

When are groups able to come?

School groups may schedule a field trip between early September and mid-November. We also take groups from mid-February until the end of May. Planning should be done well in advance so that we are able to maximize the quality of your visit. Programming options are developed around the seasons. Often, visiting teachers are included in the Outdoor Education Program. These teachers might be Cooperative Extension specialists, park rangers, wildlife biologists, and other specialists. Scheduling for visiting teachers should be done well in advance to ensure their availability. Be sure to ask about their availability.

What kinds of activities do we offer?

It must be said, we teach classroom objectives in a way unlike the classroom. We use canoes, kayaks, hiking, and “Swamp Stomps” as ways of putting young people outdoors to help them better understand the world that they live in.

Albemarle Ecology (3-8 Grade) Albemarle Ecology offers students an opportunity to explore water ecology. Opportunities for crabbing provide a chance at a unique opportunity with both recreational and educational benefits. Macro-invertebrate inventories teach students the importance of biodiversity and how it indicates water quality. Whether studying amphibians, the water cycle, or forestry in the swamp, many objectives can be met, whatever the need.

Botany and Soils (3-8 Grade) Simply stated botany is the study of plants. However, at the Eastern 4-H Center plant study is taken to a whole new level. Classes that illustrate plant growth, plant identification, and plant utility give kids an opportunity to learn outside of the book. Soil studies about erosion and soil quality are featured, as well. Participants might learn about the history of the Albemarle region through soil study. Many concepts covered in botany initiate extended exploration and questions. Ongoing projects here will allow students to help

plant a tree, which also teaches the importance of service projects, all while learning the significance of root systems, plant succession, and planting techniques.

Compass & Orienteering (3-8 Grade) Our Compass & Orienteering programs offer multiple benefits. Not only do students learn to navigate their way through a plotted course, they also build valuable life skills and survival skills. Learning about magnetic north and declination allows students the chance to take a thorough knowledge of navigation principles back home! Also, the opportunity at high-tech navigation is available through GPS technology. On-site geocaching is fun way we implement GPS technology to beginners. Also, students can learn to plot their way through a forest and follow coordinates to locate certain places. Compass and Orienteering teach many valuable life and outdoor skills...teamwork is a must. Standard Course of Study Objectives included here vary, but include Math, Science, and Social Studies. The GPS program includes technology experience. After learning how to operate a GPS unit, students can participate in high-tech scavenger hunts, inventory animal and plant sightings, and map trails.

Forestry and Wildlife Conservation (3-8 Grade) Activities offered in this area teach students the differences in conservation and preservation. Natural resource wise-use principles are instructed to students so that they are able to understand endangered species, invasive species control, significance of predator-prey relationships, maximum benefit, and sustained yield. Simply said, Forestry and Wildlife Conservation workshops teach the importance of the environment and what students can do to maintain its presence.

Green Science (3-8 Grade) Green Science allows students to witness firsthand the benefits of recycling, composting, and vermi-composting. Recycled Art allows students to think outside of the box. Recycled Art initiates problem solving, as students are asked to think of new uses for obsolete or used products. This activity is extremely hands-on. Most activities will get eager hands dirty while teaching how clean recycling can be to the environment. Student participant get creative for our "Trashion Show", a workshop that teaches students to create a usable product out of something that would normally be thrown away. Most Programs last about an hour and a half. Our Green Science program covers many SCS objectives, including Art, Science, Math , and Social Studies.

Wildlife Discovery (3-8 Grade) Understanding wildlife is well-covered from simple educational bird watching and identification to inventive programming that includes animal location and calling. Animal calling allows students to study how animals communicate within their species and how different species rely on each other for signals that might signify danger. A biological inventory will utilize students' ability to examine environment as we at the Center log all of the native species. These programs allows students the opportunity to do real research. Wildlife food identification is another program that teaches students about the food chain and its importance

"Reaching for New Heights" Challenge Course - Our top-notch team challenge course teaches confidence, communication, teamwork, and trust. Those skills lay the foundation of important decisions that face students in the years to come. "What is a team challenge course" you may ask? A Team Challenge Course is a network of games and initiatives, sometimes referred to as obstacles, where participants must complete an assigned task or challenge. Once students master

the low element initiatives, high adventure awaits in the high ropes challenge course. Students must face challenges and pick their path through our high-combined challenge course. Our challenge course instructors are highly qualified and thoroughly trained. Equipment inspections and upgrades are made constantly to ensure an enjoyable, safe experience. The course meets all standards set by the Association of Challenge Course Technology national standards. Our team Challenge Course teaches many life skills that are usable in the class room...leadership and character development, critical thinking, and cooperation are just a few...students should wear “outdoor” clothing that is properly fitted for this exciting and physically challenging workshop...Challenge course workshops can last between 2-8 hours per day, but more or less can be requested.

“Just for Fun” Recreational Opportunities These activities are offered up to all students who just want to have a new experience. We use qualified instructors for all of our “Just for Fun” activities. All activities take about 1.5 hours for groups of less than 15.

- **Climbing Wall** – Our Climbing Wall offers up new challenges to novice climbers, and a great place for experienced climbers to work on their “smearing” and “edging” (rock climbing jargon that translates to “cool ways to use your feet”).
- **Boating** – Whether through canoeing or kayaking, students will learn proper paddling techniques, parts of the boat, and safe maneuvering. Students will then put their knowledge to the test by paddling in the Albemarle Sound.
- **Arts and Crafts** – Students and teachers can express their creative side. All of the crafts we offer show students that art has multiple purposes – it has some benefit to the environment, allows self-expression, and that it can be a viable way of protecting culture.
- **Sports and Games** – We have an array of traditional games, plus loads that are unique to the Eastern 4-H Center.
- **Swimming Pool** – Our spacious pool is offered up between mid-May to mid-September. It is always staffed with a lifeguard (or two if needed).
- **Evening Programs** Our evening programs combine knowledge and the opportunity to unwind and relax in a non-competitive environment. Night Hikes and Nocturnal Animal studies are ways to learn about the night. Campfire s’mores are a popular tradition, as well as an ice cream sundae social. Indoor teambuilding games are also an inviting chance for students to appreciate each other and build confidence in themselves. Sometimes, a movie and popcorn is a viable way to enjoy the evening. Smaller groups might want to experience primitive camping. Evening programs usually take about 2 hours, but more or less can be acquired if requested.